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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATE 3300
RUEHPW/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR 3096
RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE 8604
RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI 7234
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL 3185

UNCLAS STATE 091949

SIPDIS
FOR AMBASSADOR FROM SRAP HOLBROOKE AND U/S MCHALE
SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [AF](#) [PK](#) [BBG](#)
SUBJECT: EXPANDING THE REACH OF RADIO PROGRAMMING IN PAKISTAN

1.(SBU) This is an action request, see paragraph 4.

2.(SBU) Background: There is a critical need to broaden terrestrial radio transmissions and expand available content for radio programming in Pakistan and Afghanistan. One vehicle to help us fill this need is Voice of America's (VOA) programming, including its Pashto language channel, Radio Deewa. Currently, Radio Deewa is carried on multiple shortwave frequencies and on three FM transmitters in Afghanistan. However, Radio Deewa lacks distribution on both AM and FM transmitters within Pakistan. In order to address Radio Deewa's distribution challenge, in September 2008, the International Broadcasting Board (IBB) finalized an agreement with the Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation to lease its Peshawar Transmitter. However, the lease agreement has not yet been ratified by Pakistan's Cabinet, rendering Radio Deewa unable to broadcast. Similarly, Voice of America's Urdu Service has been unable to use a separate leased network of FM transmitters in Pakistan because that lease agreement has also not been ratified by the Cabinet.

3. (SBU) In a May 11, 2009, meeting in the United States, an IBB official raised the transmitter leases with Pakistan's Minister of Information Qamar Kaira, and in that meeting Minister Kaira indicated he would render a decision on the leases "within one week." Despite several follow-up queries from IBB officials, no decision has been forthcoming.

4. (SBU) Action Request: Ambassador is requested to press the GOP for final agreement on use of these transmitters without delay, including raising the issue with President Zardari and/or Prime Minister Gilani as necessary. End Action Request.

5. (SBU) Please report results via front-channel cable.
CLINTON